

C.I.A. Will Not Prosecute Students Over Disclosures

Agency Is Reassuring

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 19—Threat to prosecution under the Central Intelligence Agency said espionage laws of the United States today it was "inconceivable" of America.

That members of the National Student Association who disclosed their secret relationship to show intent to harm the United States by giving information for their unauthorized to a foreign power. I don't think we could do that in this case."

Lawrence R. Houston, general counsel of the C.I.A., disclosed in a telephone interview that "not at all automatic" in such cases. "we have talked about that and there is to be no retribution, no prosecution."

In the past most C.I.A. officials have declined any comment to newsmen, but Mr. Houston made it clear today that he sought to reassure student association officers that there would be no criminal prosecution.

"These boys were driven into a corner where they had to say something," he said. He did not elaborate.

According to student officers, members of the association who knew of the C.I.A.'s financial support or who agreed to cooperate with the agency in collecting information abroad were required to sign a security agreement that firmly forbade any disclosures, intentionally or by "negligence."

The security oath, a copy of

which was obtained today from non-student sources, includes a warning that "intentional or negligent violation of this security agreement may subject the violator to prosecution for disclosure."

Prior to establishing a relationship with a staff member, Mr. Brown's statement said "the agency ran a security clearance on the individual and asked him to sign a national security agreement. Individuals who signed the oath were informed that violations of the oath could result in jail sentences of up to 20 years."

Mr. Houston, said today:

"Of course, we don't like what has happened, and we can't say we don't mean that the decision not to prosecute gives these people carte blanche to discuss anything further they may know that is of a confidential nature. There is some information we think they should plainly not discuss."